

IRTS Radio News Bulletin Sunday December 21ST 2003

South Dublin Radio Club

At the recent SDR Christmas Party, the winners of the club's Autumn Challenge were announced. Mark Condon EI6JK won the Open Section, Joe EI7GY was the winner of the restricted, CW only, section (to win the prize, Joe concentrated on 30 metres for the month of November), while Thos EI2JD won the VHF section, with a combination of 2 metre and 6 metre contacts.

The committee of South Dublin Radio club has organised a visit for SDR members to Dublin port radio. Dublin port are responsible for shipping traffic in the Dublin area which is an important job as there are now many different passenger ferries and cargo ships all using the port. By using VHF marine radio, radar and the new Automatic Identification System large marine traffic is guided in a similar fashion air traffic control. On Tuesday January 13th SDR members will get to visit Dublin Port Radio where all this is controlled. They will also get to 'see the face' behind the regular weather and safety broadcasts given on marine VHF frequencies. Membership of SDR is of course open to all and new members are welcome.

The next meeting of the club is on Tuesday 6th of January 2004.

Cork Radio Club

In January, Cork Radio Club will commence their club project. This Year it was decided to construct an 80 metre 500mW CW transmitter. The transmitter consists of just 15 components. The club plan to use the transmitter later in the Year in a local DF hunt. Anyone interested in electronic construction is welcome to attend the club meetings on Monday evenings about 8.30 p.m.

The postponed talk on GMDSS (Global Marine and Distress System) will take place next January. Cork Radio Club would like to wish all radio amateurs & SWL's a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

UK 4 & 6 Metres

The RSGB will hold 4m activity evenings throughout 2004. The 2004 dates will be

the 30th of March, the 31st of August and the 30th of November. The 23rd of December will see the 50 MHz UK Activity Contest from 20:00 to 22:30 hrs. UTC.

Lighthouse Maps

A map of Irish Lighthouses and Lightships is now available on EI8ICs website at www.qsl.net/ei8ic/maps/lighthouse.html When viewed with Internet Explorer, additional features are available, including identifier-boxes for each point on the map, and a sortable database that can be used off-line, with information on ARLHS number, county, position, light and tower details.

EJ9FHB on Eagle Island F63 Mayo

Daniel EI9FHB recently operated from Eagle Island Lighthouse, which is situated on Eagle Island a short distance off the coast of Mayo. Operating the rare square Fox 63 and Island EU121 he worked a number of EI stations.

Daniel who works for the Commissioners of Irish Lights visits lighthouses regularly for routine checks and repairs. The commissioners of Irish Lights look after all the lighthouses in the 32 counties including many unmanned offshore lights and buoys.

On Wednesday the 10th of December last, Daniel flew from Blacksod helipad out to the barren deserted Eagle Island bringing a HF rig in tow. Eventually time was found on Friday in a busy 5 day schedule to erect the G5RV aerial which was used for all contacts.

Band conditions were not great Friday and Saturday night so most of the contacts were made on Sunday. On setting up on Sunday, after gale force winds the night before, there appeared to be an intermittent fault with the aerial. Eventually this was tracked down to a dodgy patch lead and operation was resumed just in time to say "failte" to Paddy EI7GK who had just finished reading the IRTS news 'as Gaeilge'.

Following the initial contact with Paddy, Noel EI6HW helped control the pileup that ensued for the next hour as word of this unusual square spread. Daniel, being a South Dublin Radio Club member, hoped to contact fellow members and as luck would have it Nick EI2JL appeared on frequency.

Daniel travelled back on Monday but will return again in the future. A new QSL card from EI9FHB is also available which features Kinsale Lighthouse.

Regarding operation of other lighthouses in the future the main places planned are

Kish off Dublin, Rockabill off Swords, Mew off County Down, Maidens and Rathlin East off Antrim, Tory off Donegal, Rathlin O Bierne off Donegal, and Blackrock off Mayo. As operation is very dependant on weather, workload and emergency call-outs it will not be possible to give exact dates and times of operation in advance in the weekly news but it is hoped to give notice where possible. The worked all Ireland frequencies will be used as much as possible.

Daniel's speciality is electronics, which involves installing, repairing and checking complex remote computer monitoring and electronic control systems. These are used to automatically run lighthouses and report faults back to the head office. As well as main VHF radios many lighthouses have Radar Transponder beacons that are used by boats to fix their position in fog using radar.

A few lighthouses also broadcast GPS position information reliability, which is called differential GPS. This increases the accuracy of GPS and is broadcast on long wave frequencies. A few lighthouses also have the new marine Automatic Identification System (AIS) using which boats-computers talk to each other and relay position information. This is particularly important when large vessels are going around headlands and they cannot see what is at the far side using radar. Irish Lights have a web site at www.cil.ie

Tipperary Amateur Radio Group

The Tipperary Amateur Radio Group would like to wish all their Members and fellow Experimenters a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year. The Group held their 10th Annual Dinner in the Galtee Inn in Cahir on Saturday night last. An excellent meal was enjoyed by the good attendance who wine and dined till the small hours.

The next meeting of the Group will be on Wednesday the 7th of January 2004 in Raheen House Hotel Raheen Road Clonmel. From the New Year all monthly meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of each month.

Morse Code

KPH and K6KPH will be on the air once again for Straight Key Night this New Year's Eve.

KPH will be active on MF on 500 and 426 kHz using about 5 kW. The transmitting antenna will be a Marconi T. Announcements will be made on 500 kHz with most traffic - including weather and ARA Press being sent at 426 kHz. A watch will be maintained on 500 kHz for calls from ships. K6KPH will be active on 3545 kHz, 7050

kHz and 14050 kHz Power output will be 1.5 kW on all frequencies. Transmitting antennas will be double extended Zepps on 3.5 and 7 MHz and a H over 2 on 14 MHz. 1950s vintage RCA transmitters will be used for the operation.

The operators will be at the receiving site in Pt. Reyes, CA (RS) where it is hoped to have several operating positions active. A two-man transmitter crew will be on duty at the transmitting site in Bolinas, CA (BL). The transmitters will be remotely controlled from RS. The exact hours of operation for K6KPH will be announced soon. KPH is usually on the air past midnight Pacific Time to give MF listeners the best chance to log the station. QSL's and reception reports may be sent to: Ms. DA Stoops, P.O. Box 381, Bolinas CA, 94924-0381, USA No amateur equipment is employed at K6KPH. Only the original KPH transmitters, receivers and antennas (and some of the operators!) are used.

Items for inclusion in next weeks Radio News should be forwarded Mark Wall EI7IS. He can be contacted on 087-6302026 or e-mail cyberis@vodafone.ie. News can also be submitted via e-mail to news@irts.ie for automatic forwarding to both the radio and printed news services.

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